

Fall 1977

## UA68/1 Forum

WKU Potter College of Arts & Letters

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# FORUM

THE LIBERAL ARTS

ANOTHER LOST TRIBE OF CLIO?

By Robert H. Mounce

Every now and then an article comes across my desk which is eminently quotable. From Rockford College in Illinois I received a copy of the 1977 commencement address by Dr. Karl Jacobs, president of Rock Valley College. After reading about the "three 'Cs' of educational commitment for community colleges" (community-based, compensatory, careerism), I was about to lay the article aside when I noticed the sentence, "What society may be unwittingly doing by abandoning the humanistic studies is removing one of the most valuable mechanisms by which man in a free society can make rational and moral choices affecting his present and the future of those who follow him."

Now that's more like it! No one I know of objects to "occupational education" (the current euphemism for "technical training") for those who need it for a livelihood. When I take my car to the garage for repairs, I want the mechanic to be completely competent. What I do question, however, is the gradual shift in higher education away from those studies which inform and develop the rational capacities of man toward skill experiences which train him to fit some prescribed role



in the increasingly technological culture of twentieth-century America. At a recent convocation of university personnel from almost every nation in the world, there emerged a consensus that the major distinction between the closed and the open societies was that national needs determined the educational programs of the former while, in theory, at least, the open countries begin with the free inquiry of the professoriate. The starting point is crucial for all that follows.

A bit later in his speech Dr. Jacobs said, "There is a growing awareness that the person with narrowly-packaged skills and training may lack certain intangible talents that are extremely important to our society." In speaking to the need of an enlightened public, he added, "The values and importance of the liberal arts go beyond the narrow context of satisfying the needs of employers. The foundation of a democratic society rests upon a well-informed and enlightened citizenry. It is not surprising that the number of democracies in the world are few."

Dr. Jacobs reports that, when business establishments are asked, "What is the greatest need of your organization?" the response is for broadly trained people who can display a versatility or flexibility of thinking--people who can bring perspective and insight to problems. This point is strengthened considerably by the fact that Dr. Jacobs is the president of a community college, not the dean of a liberal arts school. If all post-secondary education were under the direction of individuals of his persuasion, we could have less anxiety about the current surge of interest in vocational preparation.

WEDNESDAY, FROM THREE TIL FIVE

By Robert H. Mounce

What is culture? Is there something that can be properly designated as Culture or are there simply many cultures? Is some music "better" than other music? If so, what are its distinguishing characteristics? Why is Shakespeare better than Popeye? Or is it? Should culture be forced upon students? To what extent, if any, is television responsible for the current level of appreciation of traditional culture? Is education morally responsible to lead the student into a more enlightened understanding of that which the Western world has for centuries regarded as artistically and intellectually superior? Or is education simply a sophisticated form of brainwashing? Does study in the humanities make more humane people? What about the Third Reich with its cultural achievements? What went awry?

Sounds like the agenda for a national conference of humanists. Actually it represents the range of questions touched upon in an extended discussion last week by a randomly-selected group of faculty meeting with the dean for an informal exchange of ideas.

Reflecting on the highly stimulating and exceptionally profitable encounter, I have been moved toward several conclusions. First, we have in Potter College a remarkably fine group of highly intelligent individuals. The quality of insight and the precision of expression on that occasion gave evidence of superior minds at work.

Second, we need one another in order to sharpen our own understanding of issues. In a collegial setting we have the good fortune of being able to expose our points of view to others with different perspectives and varying perceptions of what is of major significance. At times our tentative hypotheses are strengthened by



the insights of colleagues; at other times they are altered; occasionally they are demolished.

Third, we probably need to structure occasions for open exchange of ideas. Reading does not necessarily involve an active intellectual confrontation with the author. All too often we tend to read rather passively. Personal dialogue, on the other hand, is more apt to involve a creative interchange.

Fourth, it is my conviction that, regardless of how well we may have done our work in the past, there remain almost unlimited possibilities for improvement. The advance I am thinking of is not simply the acquisition of fresh information in our disciplines. That is taken for granted. The advance which I feel will be of the greatest benefit to our students has to do with the intellectual excitement that results quite naturally from open interchange between individual teachers from different disciplines.

For our own sake, to say nothing of the welfare of the student body, we need to be drawn into intellectual conflict with others who are passionately concerned to find out what it's all about. A mind at rest is either smugly secure at having all the answers or unconcerned about the issue and unable to generate enthusiasm. Both are tragic and disqualify a person from the teaching profession.

\* Back to the question of culture. We didn't arrive at a final answer, but we did get absorbed in the question. Our minds were broadened by the experience of thinking together. We all became a little more hesitant to write off others as blathering idiots. We realized that our private understanding was not necessarily absolutely accurate or universally normative. Thinking took place--rara avis that it is, even on a university campus. How to make the life of the mind our central concern is, in my opinion, the number one priority of the College of Arts and Humanities.

## FACULTY ACTIVITIES AND AWARDS

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### ART

JOHN WARREN OAKES recently exhibited his work in a one-man show at the Bowling Green Public Library and also at the Logan County Public Library in Russellville. He has been appointed chairman of the Western Regional Conference of the Kentucky Alliance for Arts Education. Paintings in "The Painterly Tradition" were also exhibited at Sinclair College in Dayton, Ohio.

LAURIN D. NOTHEISEN exhibited fifteen works of art at the Byck Gallery in Louisville.

### COMMUNICATION AND THEATRE

JAMES A. PEARSE participated in The National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar on Contemporary American Writing at Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts. He also received a WKU Summer Research Fellowship to study "Critical Judgment of Performed Texts."

PATRICIA M. TAYLOR played the part of Amanda in the Horse Cave Theatre production of The Glass Menagerie. In addition to that role, her activities there included teaching the history of drama segments of the Children's Theatre Workshop and understudying the role of Candida.

LARRY JAMES WINN was elected President of the Western Kentucky chapter of Phi Delta Kappa. He published "Public Speaking and the Political Image" in the Kentucky Journal of Communication Arts (Fall, 1977).



(WINN, continued) In addition, he served as a panelist on the topic, "Strengthening Chapter Meetings" at the Kentucky Phi Delta Kappa Leadership Conference, April 30, 1977.

RANDALL CAPPS, CARLEY DODD, and LARRY WINN have been awarded a contract by MacMillan Publishing Company for a textbook for business and professional speaking. The contract calls for a completion date of mid-1978.

The SPEECH CLINIC is sponsoring a new program-- a parent/child development program for children with multiple handicaps. The program is designed as a multi-disciplinary program utilizing University departments specializing in infant/child development and family counseling. This is another program to both serve the community and better facilitate students in professional health care services.

## ENGLISH

JOSEPH M. BOGGS wrote the short play, The Elevator, which was performed at the Eastern Kentucky Video Art Show.

JIM FLYNN attended a Summer Seminar sponsored by the National Endowment for Humanities at Indiana University.

\* JOHN LEWTER published four occasional poems in POEM; "Hunters," a short story in HELP YOURSELF; and a short story, "And Tib My Wife," in Ball State University Forum.

FRANK STEELE co-chaired a section on Stephen Spender's poetry at the Sigma Tau Delta meeting at WKU this past spring. He also read his poems at the Sigma Tau Delta meeting.

ELIZABETH OAKES read a paper, "Murder Behind the Arras: Literal and Figurative," at the Southeastern Renaissance Conference in April at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. She published the note, "Prufrock and King Arthur," in Notes on Contemporary Literature. She also published the poem, "Vignette Domesticos," in Adena.

JOSEPH GLASER read the papers, "Tragic Foreshadowing in Marlowe's Hero and Leander," at the Philological Association of the Carolinas, and "Herbert and the Book of Nature," at the Kentucky Philological Association. He published the article "Recent Herrick Criticism," in the College Language Association Journal. He was elected Archivist of the Kentucky Philological Association. In addition, he attended the National Endowment for the Humanities summer seminar at the University of Michigan. He was also a co-speaker at the colloquium, "Science Fiction and Fantasy," at the regional meeting of Sigma Tau Delta, the national English honor society.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGES

JIM WAYNE MILLER participated in the Virginia Poet-in-the-Schools Program in Washington County, Virginia. He presented papers or read poems at East Tennessee State University, the University of Kentucky, conducted a poetry workshop at Morehead State University, and served as a consultant to the Appalachian Studies Program at Alice Lloyd College. For the fifth year, he directed the Literature and the Arts phase of the Appalachian Studies Workshop at Berea College and taught in their summer school as visiting professor. Along with Joy Bale Boone, he participated in the Governor's Conference on Aging and contributed to a project on regional arts sponsored by the Kentucky Humanities Council. He read with Frank Steele and Stephen Spender at the regional Sigma Tau Delta meeting held at Western. His recent publications include: a short story in Wind magazine,



(MILLER, continued) two poems in International Poetry Review, three poems in Wind magazine, one poem and one essay in Appalachian Heritage, and one essay in Mountain Review. In addition, Miller wrote "Original Red: A Short Story." This poem, honoring Robert Penn Warren, who made his last appearance at Vanderbilt University, was published in Vanderbilt Poetry Review.

MANIA RITTER is president of the Association of American Teachers of Slavic European Languages.

## HISTORY

HELEN B. CROCKER published the article "Green River Photographer," in the Courier-Journal and Times Magazine.

RICHARD D. WEIGEL delivered a paper on "The Roman Republican Peace," before the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations at Bradford College in Massachusetts. He received a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar grant to study "Problems in Roman Topography" at the American Academy in Rome.

RICHARD V. SALISBURY wrote the article "Costa Rica and the 1920-1921 Union Movement: A Reassessment," published in the Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs. His paper "United States Policy in Latin America during the 1920's: An Anti-Imperialist Response," was presented at the Third National Meeting of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations at the University of Virginia. In addition, he received a grant to travel in Quito, Ecuador, to explore the various possibilities for research in 19th and 20th century Ecuadorean History.

LOWELL H. HARRISON published the article "George Rogers Clark and the Conquest of Illinois," in American History Illustrated; "Jackson. . . Is a Ruined Town," in Civil War Time Illustrated; "Significant Books in Kentucky History," in The Filson Club History Quarterly.

(HARRISON, continued) He published two reviews in Register of the Kentucky Historical Society and two reviews in American History Illustrated. In addition, he gave the following speeches: "The Civil War in Kentucky: Some Persistent Questions," Cincinnati Civil War Roundtable; "George Rogers Clark and the War in the West," Ohio Society of Colonial Wars; and "General Basil W. Duke, C.S.A," Harrisburg Civil War Roundtable.

## INTERCULTURAL AND FOLK STUDIES

BURT FEINTUCH received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in support of a project involving the documentation and dissemination of the traditional music of south central Kentucky. The ultimate result will be the production of a set of phonograph records with accompanying scholarly booklets. The project is also being supported by the Bowling Green-Warren County Arts Commission. He published two articles, "A Contextual and Cognitive Approach to Folk Art and Folk Craft," in New York Folklore, and "Notes on Fiddle Run: Formulaic Composition in the Music of an Old-Time Fiddler," in Keystone Folklore. In addition, he had book and film reviews published in the Journal of American Folklore and Keystone Folklore.

LYNWOOD MONTELL served as oral history and folklore consultant for the Appalachian Museum in Berea, Kentucky. He addressed a college-wide audience and two history classes at Union College in Barbourville, Kentucky, on the topic of oral history methodology, and folklore and regional interpretation. In addition, he addressed a university-wide audience and two anthropology classes at the University of Wisconsin, Kenosha, on the topic of black oral history. Montell spoke through an interpreter at Indiana University to a group of black African scholars on the topic "Coe Ridge: A Case Study in Oral History." The appearance



(MONTELL, continued) was sponsored by Crossroads Africa and the U. S. State Department. He received a grant from the Kentucky Oral History Commission to interview black public officials in Southern Kentucky. The project is now underway.

ROBERT T. TESKE published three publications. They include: "Ethnic Folklore in Detroit," in Ethnic City, A Guide to Ethnic Detroit; "Preface," in Afro-American Folklore Collections; and "On the Making of Bobonieries and Marturia in Greek Philadelphia: Commercialism in Folk Religion," in Journal of the Folklore Institute. Teske presented the paper "Ethnic Folklife," to the American Folklore Society Meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and "The Wayne State University Folk Medical Collection: A Developmental Report," Michigan in Perspective, to the Conference of the Michigan Local History Association. He is co-chairman of the 1977 Program Committee of the American Folklore Society.

## JOURNALISM

JIM HIGHLAND was selected deputy regional director at the regional convention of the Society of Professional Journalists--Sigma Delta Chi. He has published several hundred newspaper articles since the last Forum.

CAROLYN STRINGER prepared the advertising and co-edited a 56-page Bowling Green-Warren County capabilities brochure, to be distributed by the Chamber of Commerce.

## MUSIC

JAMES H. GODFREY was elected President-Elect of the National School Orchestra Association.

Twenty-one student members of the Western Kentucky University Clarinet Ensemble, under the direction of Dr. THOMAS WATSON, have been selected to participate in the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) Biennial Convention April 12 through 16, 1978, in Chicago, Illinois. The ensemble will perform with other qualified orchestras from across the nation. The conference's theme is "Music is Basic to Education and Life." Western's clarinet ensemble is the first group in the history of the University to perform at the MENC National Convention, one of the largest and most prestigious professional music organizations in the country. The ensemble will gain the opportunity to share its accomplishments and musicianship with approximately 8,000 music educators.

## PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

ROBERT C. ROBERTS published the article, "The Feeling of Absolute Dependence," in the Journal of Religion.

EDWARD L. SCHOEN read a paper for a symposium entitled "Physicalism: A Problem or a Solution?" at the Southeastern Section meetings of the Evangelical Theological Society. His publication "Toward a Christian Conception of Man" appeared in the Journal of Psychology and Theology.

JAMES D. SPICELAND received a Faculty Summer Research Grant which made it possible to travel to England to Exeter University.

ROBERT K. JOHNSTON published the following: "Of Tidy Doctrine and Truncated Experience," in Christianity Today; a review of The Evangelical Faith, in Christianity Today; a review of Agenda for Biblical People, in Christianity Today; a review of Meditation for Lovers, in Theology News and Notes. In addition, he presented a paper to the National Institute for



(JOHNSTON, continued) Campus Ministry's Ecumenical-Evangelical Consultation entitled "Evangelical Social Ethics: Current Options and Questions."

DONALD R. TUCK participated in the United Methodist Louisville Conference "School of Mission" held at Kentucky Wesleyan College, lecturing on the topic "Religion and Society in the Caribbean Crescent."

E. MARGARET HOWE read the paper, "The Life and Teachings of Jesus in the Writings of Nikos Kazantzakis," at the Evangelical Theological Society Southeastern Section. She was appointed Secretary-Treasurer of that organization.

JOHN E. LONG had four articles accepted for publication in Tyndale Bible Encyclopedia.

ROBERT H. MOUNCE published The Book of Revelation (Eerdmans) in the New International Commentary on the New Testament series.

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